



***Shaping Futures: Global Connections
and Collaborations for the
Implementation of
Micro-Credentials in Southern Africa***

PoMiSA Conference 2025

**14 -16 October 2025, Ravenala Attitude Hotel, Balaclava,
Mauritius**

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PoMiSA Conference 2025 – 14 -16 October 2025, Ravenala Attitude Hotel, Balaclava, Mauritius

Executive Summary

The Potential of Micro-Credentials in Southern Africa (PoMiSA) Conference 2025, held from 14–16 October 2025 at the Ravenala Attitude Hotel in Balaclava, Mauritius, marked a major milestone in advancing the development, recognition, and quality assurance of micro-credentials across Southern Africa and Europe. The event brought together higher education institutions, qualifications authorities, policymakers, international partners, and industry representatives, with participation from UNESCO, the European Union, SADC, and PoMiSA partner countries including Mauritius, South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Ireland, Belgium (Flanders), and Estonia.

Mauritius was highlighted as a regional leader in micro-credentials, driven by the integration of micro-credentials within the National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS), the approval of the Blueprint for Micro-Credentials, and amendments to the Higher Education Act granting the Higher Education Commission (HEC) the mandate to approve and recognise micro-credentials. These initiatives align national reforms with international frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and UNESCO guidance.

Keynote contributions from UNESCO and the European Union underscored micro-credentials as essential tools to address skills mismatches, unemployment, inequality, and the impacts of artificial intelligence on labour markets. With only 35% of global SDG targets on track, the discussions emphasised micro-credentials as vehicles for social inclusion, lifelong learning, and employability, particularly for youth, women, and marginalised communities.

The PoMiSA “State of Play and Synthesis Reports”¹ revealed shared regional challenges, including the lack of standardised definitions, fragmented ecosystems, unequal digital access, and limited policy harmonisation. In contrast, best practices from Ireland and Estonia demonstrated the benefits of strong national platforms, clear frameworks, and employer engagement. Across all countries, there was strong consensus on the importance of quality assurance, stackability, portability, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and alignment to national and regional qualifications frameworks, including the SADCQF.

Professional development workshops and interactive sessions reinforced the need to balance flexibility with quality, innovation with governance, and digitisation with equity. Participants highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration, industry co-design, and the development of a regional framework and micro-credentials handbook to guide sustainable implementation.

Overall, the PoMiSA Conference 2025 firmly positioned micro-credentials as a transformative mechanism for strengthening education systems, supporting workforce development, and advancing Mauritius’ vision of becoming a regional education and knowledge hub

¹ <https://pomisa.hec.mu/resources>



DAY 1: Tuesday, 14 October 2025

Rapporteur: Higher Education Commission Mauritius

Opening Ceremony – Launch of PoMiSA Project

The opening ceremony began at 09:50 a.m. with Professor Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), welcoming participants from various qualification authorities, higher education institutions, and international partners.



Photo 1: Professor R. Mohee greeted and welcomed all participants and distinguished guests.

Welcome Remarks – Professor R. Mohee

Professor Mohee highlighted that the launch of PoMiSA (Potential of Micro-Credentials in Southern Africa) marks an important milestone for Mauritius in its journey toward promoting learning, skills development, and employability.

She emphasised that PoMiSA aims to strengthen collaboration among 18 partners, including international delegates from South Africa, Lesotho, Estonia, Belgium, Namibia, and Ireland, representing a truly reflective and collaborative initiative.

Professor Mohee also mentioned that the publication “State of Play”, released in September 2024 in collaboration with the University of Mauritius (UoM) and the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM), showcased the country’s progress in the field of Micro-Credentials (MC). Mauritius is positioning itself as a leader in Micro-Credentials in the region, aligned with the vision of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research.

She further stressed the proactive collaboration between Mauritius, SADC, UNESCO, and the European Union, and noted the establishment of the PoMiSA Steering Committee to oversee policy alignment and ensure mutual recognition of Micro-Credentials across partner nations.



Address – Dr. James Keevy, CEO, JET Education Services

Dr. James Keevy, CEO of JET Education Services, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to collaborate closely with HEC Mauritius and the 18 partner institutions. He outlined the five work packages (WP1–WP5) of the PoMiSA project, noting that the initiative embraces a lifelong learning approach and promotes the development of micro-credentials driven by industry needs.

Dr. Keevy explained that the project has been a rewarding journey of shared learning among all partners. He reaffirmed that PoMiSA’s core objective is to bridge the gap between education and employment by equipping learners with practical, recognised, and industry-relevant skills.

He added that achieving the region’s economic goals requires collaboration rather than isolated efforts, mentioning that a representative from the European Commission would also be joining the conference online. Dr. Keevy further clarified that several countries have already developed national concept papers to guide the rollout of micro-credentials, with Mauritius being ahead in this process. He concluded by emphasising the importance of continued consultation and stakeholder engagement as the initiative progresses.



Photo 2: Dr. James Keevy elaborating on the PoMiSA project’s work packages.

Address – Mrs. Maria Luisa Troncosso, European Union Delegation

Mrs. Maria Luisa Troncosso described the PoMiSA Conference as a platform of vision, expertise, and partnership dedicated to shaping the future of learning in Southern Africa—a true reflection of regional and international collaboration. She explained that the PoMiSA initiative, launched in 2023 with an EU contribution of nearly €800,000, brings together higher education institutions and qualification authorities from Mauritius, South Africa, Lesotho, and Namibia, working closely with European partners from Belgium (Flanders), Ireland, and Estonia. The University of Johannesburg serves as the coordinating institution, while the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology, Mauritius, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) play pivotal roles in coordinating the involvement of Mauritius in the initiative.

Mrs. Troncosso commended Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, PFHEA, the Honourable Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research for Mauritius’s strong engagement in PoMiSA and its active participation in other Erasmus+ initiatives.





Photo 3: Mrs. Maria Luisa Troncoso addressing participants, highlighting EU support for innovation and cooperation

She noted that PoMiSA is one of five Erasmus Capacity-Building for Higher Education projects currently benefiting Mauritius. The other initiatives focus on energy, blue entrepreneurship, the promotion of sustainable development goals (SDGs) through participatory approaches, and entrepreneurship based on medicinal and aromatic plants. Collectively, these projects reflect the EU's strong commitment to innovation, inclusion, and sustainability.

Mrs. Troncoso also highlighted the active participation of Mauritian students and academics in Erasmus+ mobility programmes, which continue to strengthen cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange. For over 15 years, at least one Mauritian student annually has been awarded the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree, an achievement that reflects both the country's talent and ambition.

She further mentioned that the partnership between Africa and Europe extends under the Global Gateway Africa–Europe Investment Package. In this context, the EU had the honour of joining the Honourable Minister at the 6th African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF) Continental Forum in September, which focused on developing future-ready qualification systems in Africa—a theme strongly aligned with PoMiSA's objectives.

Through the Horizon Europe Programme, the EU continues to encourage both the public and private sectors in Mauritius to seize opportunities in advanced research and innovation ecosystems. She invited Mauritian institutions to participate in the open calls for proposals currently available under these programmes.

Mrs. Troncoso concluded by reaffirming that the goals of PoMiSA are closely aligned with EU priorities—quality education, employability, skills development, and the green and digital transitions—all of which resonate with Mauritius's ambition to become a knowledge hub, address skills mismatches, retain talent, and promote entrepreneurship.

She commended Mauritius for leading by example, having already integrated micro-credentials into its National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS) and partnered with global platforms to offer credit-bearing online learning. This, she noted, is a powerful demonstration of how global cooperation can be adapted to local needs.

“PoMiSA,” she affirmed, “is more than a project; it is a shared commitment to making education accessible, adaptable, and inclusive.” She concluded by emphasising that Europe and Southern Africa are jointly building pathways that empower learners, strengthen economies, and prepare societies for the future, before extending her appreciation to all participants and wishing them a productive and inspiring conference.



Official Opening – Honourable Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, PFHEA

The Honourable Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, PFHEA, officially inaugurated the PoMiSA Conference, marking the transition “from discussion to implementation” following two years of preparation and collaborative effort.

The Minister underscored the pivotal role of micro-credentials in strengthening partnerships between academia and industry, enhancing the flexibility and portability of learning achievements, and ensuring that education systems remain responsive to evolving global trends. He further highlighted that the Cabinet’s approval and formal recognition of the National Micro-Credentials Framework represents a significant milestone in shaping the future of education in Mauritius.

Dr. Sukon emphasised that micro-credentials present new opportunities for graduates by establishing an implementation framework that maximises learning outcomes and employability. He remarked that “whoever coined the term micro-credentials, credentials are credentials,” reiterating that all forms of verified learning hold value when aligned with recognised standards.



Photo 4: The Honourable Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, PFHEA, addressing the audience on the importance of Micro-Credentials.

He concluded by describing the PoMiSA initiative as “sowing the seed for the future of higher education,” built on a foundation of trust, collaboration, and shared responsibility between academia and industry.

Tokens of Appreciation

Bouquets and tokens were presented to the Honourable Minister Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, PFHEA, Mrs. Jhowry, the Permanent Secretary and Dr. James Keevy, CEO, JET of Education Services in recognition of their contributions.



Photo 5: Moments captured during the token presentations.



The ceremony concluded with a group photo symbolising shared commitment to advancing lifelong learning in the region.



Photo 6: Group photo of delegates and participants.

Session 1: International Keynote (UNESCO)

Speaker: Dr. Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO

Theme: The Global State of Micro-credentials and Their Potential for Social Impact

Dr. Borhene Chakroun commenced his keynote presentation by emphasising how micro-credentials are reshaping education and employability on a global scale, noting that their value extends beyond academic recognition to encompass significant social and economic dimensions. He underlined that micro-credentials possess the potential to transform societies by equipping individuals with new skills, facilitating access to labour markets, and enabling adaptation to the rapid technological changes brought about by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

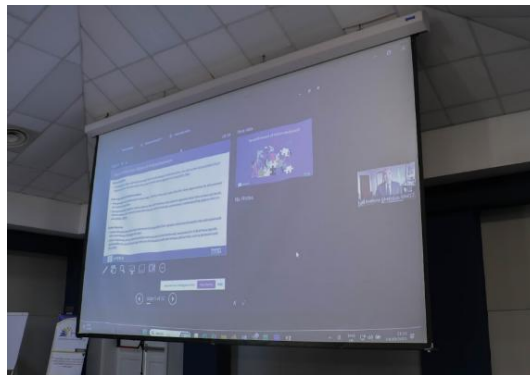


Photo 7: Dr. Borhene Chakroun delivering the Session 1 “International Keynote” presentation online via Zoom.

The opening session of the PoMiSA Conference 2025 laid the foundation for in-depth discussions on the transformative role of micro-credentials in advancing equity, lifelong learning and employability.

Dr. Chakroun’s keynote address, titled “The Global State of Micro-credentials and Their Potential for Social Impact,” examined international trends, challenges, and policy alignments that position micro-credentials as instruments of inclusive and sustainable education.



Global Context and Equity Trends

Dr. Chakroun placed his analysis within the context of persistent global inequalities and the slow pace of progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Referencing the 2025 UN SDG Progress Report, he noted that the world remains significantly off track to achieve the 2030 Agenda:

- Only 35% of the 139 measurable SDG targets show adequate progress.
- 18% are on track.
- Nearly 48% show insufficient or no progress.
- Alarming, 18% have fallen below their 2015 baselines.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Employment and Inequality

Dr. Chakroun explored the influence of AI on global labour markets, drawing attention to its uneven impact:

- One in four workers worldwide holds a job exposed to generative AI.
- Exposure is higher in low- and middle-income countries, especially among women, urban workers, and tertiary-educated individuals.
- Early-career employees (ages 22–25) in AI-affected sectors have experienced a 13% decline in employment, while rates for older workers remain stable.

He warned that AI-driven automation risks undermining job creation and exacerbating social disparities unless inclusive and rapid reskilling mechanisms, such as micro-credentials, are adopted at scale.

Vulnerable Groups and Social Risks

Dr. Chakroun identified skill polarisation as a growing challenge, whereby AI increases demand for high-level skills while displacing lower-skilled workers. The groups most at risk include:

- Youth, migrant workers, and informal employees, who often lack structured upskilling opportunities.
- Women, particularly in administrative and secretarial roles, where 9.6% of jobs are at high risk of automation, compared to 3.5% of male-dominated positions.

Societal Impact of Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials, according to Dr. Chakroun, are catalysts for social inclusion and lifelong learning. They enable individuals—especially refugees, displaced persons, and those affected by crises—to acquire recognised, stackable qualifications that enhance employability.



He presented international examples demonstrating varied implementation models:

Country/Region	Key Features
Malaysia	Accredited institutions offering standalone or embedded courses for professional growth.
Europe (MICROBOL)	ESG quality-assured; focuses on societal and labour-market needs through RPL.
Canada	Industry-aligned, stackable credentials supporting seamless learning.
New Zealand	Community-based models reviewed annually for inclusivity and relevance.
Australia	AQF revision prioritising short, flexible learning from accredited providers.
UNESCO & OECD	Frameworks promoting interoperability and digital credentialing.
United States (SUNY)	University-endorsed micro-credentials validating specific competencies.

These global cases demonstrate how micro-credentials balance labour-market relevance, personal development, and social equity.

Lifelong Learning, Employability, and Flexible Pathways

Dr. Chakroun described micro-credentials as essential tools for reskilling and upskilling in rapidly evolving economies. He stated that they:

- Foster a culture of lifelong learning adaptable to diverse professional contexts.
- Enhance employability and economic resilience.
- Offer alternative routes into higher education, reducing dropout rates and widening participation.

He referenced examples from Finland, Belgium, Norway, and the United States, where modular learning systems have strengthened learner retention and alignment with workforce needs.

Cross-Border Recognition and Policy Convergence

Dr. Chakroun stressed that recognition, quality, and portability form the foundation of effective global micro-credential frameworks.

He cited key international initiatives supporting policy harmonisation:

- UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, promoting fair and transparent validation of all forms of learning.



- The European Union Council Recommendation on Micro-credentials (2022), advocating quality assurance and transparency.
- The Tokyo Convention (Asia-Pacific), encouraging recognition of online and work-based micro-credentials to facilitate regional mobility.

Together, these frameworks signal a growing policy convergence and shared vision for interoperable education ecosystems.

Emerging Challenges

Despite widespread momentum, Dr. Chakroun identified several ongoing challenges:

- Lack of standardisation, with no universally agreed definition or taxonomy.
- Fragmented provider ecosystems, resulting in inconsistency in quality and recognition.
- Digital inequality, limiting access for low-income and rural learners.
- Data governance and cybersecurity concerns within digital credentialing systems.

He cautioned that a purely “digital-first approach” could deepen existing inequalities and urged policymakers to integrate equity safeguards into all digital learning strategies.

The Way Forward: Shared Responsibility and Collaboration

In conclusion, Dr. Chakroun advocated a cross-sectoral and collaborative approach to ensure that micro-credentials advance sustainable development. He introduced UNESCO’s Digital Transformation Collaborative (DTC) Framework, structured around the “6Cs,” which promotes digital transformation guided by equity, inclusion and Sustainability.

Key recommendations included:

- Defining learning outcomes through standardised competency frameworks.
- Ensuring transparency and validation processes accessible to both learners and employers.
- Designing micro-credentials that complement existing qualifications and strengthen education systems.
- Placing inclusivity and accessibility at the centre of all design and policy efforts.

Dr. Chakroun concluded that micro-credentials are a vital instrument for democratising access to education, promoting employability, and advancing lifelong learning. However, he emphasised that realising their full potential requires global cooperation, policy coherence, and shared accountability among governments, institutions, and industry stakeholders.

His presentation effectively positioned micro-credentials as both a social equalizer and an economic enabler, setting the tone for the rich thematic discussions that followed throughout the PoMiSA Conference 2025.



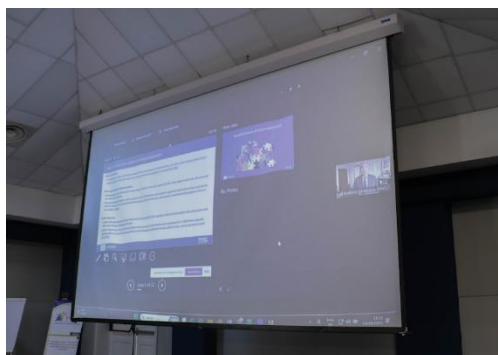


Photo 7: Dr. Borhene Chakroun presenting online during Session 1.

Session 2: State of Play of Micro-credentials in PoMiSA Countries

Presenters: North-West University (NWU), South Africa

The session, led by the North-West University (NWU) team, provided a comprehensive comparative overview of micro-credential developments across seven PoMiSA partner countries—Estonia, Belgium/Flanders, Ireland, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, and South Africa. Drawing from each country’s *State of Play* report, the findings were consolidated into the PoMiSA Synthesis Report, which presented shared trends, challenges, and recommendations to strengthen regional cooperation and policy harmonisation. The presentation underscored the growing role of micro-credentials as strategic tools to bridge skills gaps, promote lifelong learning, and enhance employability across both developed and developing contexts.

Estonia:

As a digitally advanced nation, Estonia has integrated micro-credentials into its lifelong learning and adult education strategy. Amendments to the Adult Education Act (2025) now provide for regulation and recognition aligned with the EstQF/EQF. While provision is dominated by higher education institutions, future reforms aim to include licensed non-HEI providers under quality-assured systems. Access remains a challenge due to course fees, but employer consultation and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are being strengthened.

Belgium/Flanders:

Operating under a federal system, the Flemish Community leads education policy but lacks a formal definition of micro-credentials. Strong momentum aligns with the EU’s 2030 lifelong learning target, and several higher education institutions offer modular learning options. Persistent challenges include low participation rates, limited employer engagement, and lack of standardisation. Recommendations include establishing a legal definition, promoting inclusive access, and enhancing stakeholder awareness.

Ireland:

Ireland represents one of the most advanced ecosystems, supported by the National Skills Strategy 2025, Springboard+, and Skillnet Ireland. The MicroCreds.ie platform serves as a national repository for quality-assured, stackable credentials, with oversight by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Although challenges remain in portability and awareness, Ireland’s coordinated approach demonstrates the benefits of strong policy alignment, employer collaboration, and public funding.



Lesotho:

With high youth unemployment and digital inequity, Lesotho views micro-credentials as a bridge between formal and informal learning, particularly in rural communities. While no framework yet exists, stakeholder interest indicates readiness for adoption. Recommendations include developing a national policy and framework, integrating it into the Lesotho Qualifications Framework (LQF) and SADCQF, and improving digital access and collaboration between education and industry.

Mauritius:

Mauritius has emerged as a regional leader and early adopter. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is embedding micro-credentials into the National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS), aligning them with the EQF, HAQAA, and Addis Convention. Central to both the National Skills Development Strategy (2022–2026) and HEC Strategic Plan (2022–2025), the initiative aims to position Mauritius as a regional education hub. Key challenges include the absence of a unified national definition and the need for greater employer awareness.

Namibia:

Namibia regards micro-credentials as essential for inclusive workforce development. A national framework is under review within the National Human Resource Development Strategy. Barriers include low motivation among staff, limited infrastructure, and digital divides. Recommendations include establishing a multi-stakeholder task force, promoting digital literacy, and piloting sector-specific micro-credentials.

South Africa:

South Africa's education system is supported by strong quality institutions such as SAQA, QCTO, and SETAs, yet implementation of micro-credentials remains uncoordinated. Micro-credentials are seen as a potential game-changer if anchored in a coherent national policy aligned with the NQF. The NWU team highlighted the need for data-driven evaluation, policy coherence, and inclusive design targeting NEET populations.

Key Findings of the PoMiSA Synthesis Report

The PoMiSA Synthesis Report identified shared patterns across all partner countries:

- **Common Drivers:** Micro-credentials are shaped by global shifts toward lifelong learning, the digital and green transitions, and evolving labour-market demands for modular, skills-based education.
- **Micro-credentials as Catalysts:** Recognised as tools for economic recovery, inclusion, and skills upgrading.
- **Need for Conceptual Clarity:** While European partners have formalised definitions, Southern African countries are still building shared understanding and terminology.
- **Uneven Policy Development:** Europe benefits from EQF-aligned systems, while Mauritius is leading progress in Southern Africa.
- **Fragmented Provider Ecosystem:** European systems exhibit greater quality assurance, whereas African countries require enhanced regulatory coordination.



- Varying Implementation Capacity: Institutional readiness differs widely; effective rollout depends on funding, industry collaboration, and policy prioritisation.

Key Recommendations

1. **Develop Shared Definitions:** Establish clear, locally relevant yet globally interoperable definitions of micro-credentials.
2. **Align with National and Regional Frameworks:** Integrate micro-credentials into NQFs and the SADCQF to ensure recognition and quality assurance.
3. **Support Diverse Providers:** Encourage collaboration among universities, TVETs, NGOs, and private providers through joint delivery models.
4. **Promote Inclusive Access:** Design low-bandwidth, mobile-accessible learning solutions for underserved communities.
5. **Build Awareness and Trust:** Conduct awareness campaigns to strengthen understanding among learners, employers, and policymakers.
6. **Implement Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish data systems to assess impact, employability outcomes, and long-term sustainability.

To sum up, the NWU team concluded that micro-credentials are emerging as a transformative mechanism for advancing lifelong learning and employability across Africa and Europe. Their success depends on coherent policies, robust quality assurance, and sustained regional collaboration to ensure that learning remains inclusive, responsive, and future-oriented.



Photo 8: Dr. Alida Herbst and Prof. Herman van der Merwe presenting the synthesis report.



Minister's Closing Remarks

The Honourable Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, emphasised that the ongoing work under the PoMiSA initiative will enable policymakers to create a conducive environment for lifelong learning. He remarked that “knowledge is power, and micro-credentials will serve as the power bank of lifelong learning,” underscoring their vital role in fostering continuous education and skill enhancement.



Photo 9: The Honourable Minister expressing appreciation to PoMiSA members.

Dr. Sukon extended his best wishes for productive deliberations throughout the conference and requested that a comprehensive report be prepared to guide the Ministry's efforts in formally engaging with industry partners. He noted that such collaboration would help establish the appropriate policy frameworks and ensure that every acquired skill translates into meaningful employment opportunities.

He further stated that micro-credentials will empower individuals to keep learning, adapting, and contributing to the development of a smarter and more resilient nation. The Honourable Minister concluded by expressing his appreciation to all participants and formally brought the session to a close.

Session 3: Parallel PechaKucha Sessions

Theme: State of Play of Micro-credentials in PoMiSA Countries

Panel 1: Moderator: Prof. Robin Sannasee

Professor R. Sannasee from the SADC Secretariat opened the session by greeting the audience and outlining the session's structure. He explained that the session would be conducted in two parts: the first segment would feature presentations from Mauritius, Belgium, and Lesotho, each limited to five minutes in accordance with the Pecha Kucha format, while the second segment would consist of an interactive discussion open to participants.





Photo 10: Professor R. Sannasee moderating Session 3, Panel 1 during the PoMiSA Conference 2025, guiding discussions on micro-credentials and their role in higher education and workforce development.

- **Mauritius Presentation**

Dr. Noshmee Baguant, Acting Head of the Regulatory Affairs and Accreditation Division at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Mauritius, delivered the first presentation on behalf of Professor Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the HEC. Her presentation focused on the state of play of micro-credentials in Mauritius, the full version of which is available on the PoMiSA website (pomisa.hec.mu).

Dr. Baguant highlighted the significant potential of micro-credentials in advancing:

1. Skilling
2. Reskilling
3. Upskilling
4. Lifelong learning
5. Flexible learning pathways

She then outlined the key instruments developed by the HEC to bridge existing gaps in the higher education and training ecosystem:

1. HEC Strategic Plan (2022–2025)
2. National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS) Framework, aligning micro-credentials with one credit equivalent to 20 notional hours
3. NCVTS Guidelines
4. Micro-credentials in Mauritius: Towards a National Framework for TVET and Higher Education, a study conducted jointly by UNESCO IIEP, HEC Mauritius, and the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)
5. Blueprint for Micro-credentials in Higher Education: From Concept to Execution, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in August 2025

Journey of Micro-credentials in Mauritius

Dr. Baguant traced the journey of micro-credentials in Mauritius over the past two years. The initiative began with national and institutional surveys in 2023, followed by collaboration with UNESCO and IIEP on national consultations for a Micro-credentials Framework for higher education and TVET.

In May 2025, HEC Mauritius hosted national workshops and introduced amendments to the Higher Education Act, officially granting the Commission the mandate to approve and recognise micro-credentials.



By August 2025, the Cabinet approved the national Blueprint, and in October 2025, a Steering Committee was established to oversee implementation, alongside the launch of an industry-led micro-credentials pilot project.



Photo 11: Dr. Noshmee Baguant outlining the Micro-credential journey

Concept and Key Drivers

Dr. Baguant presented the definition of micro-credentials, which aligns with the UNESCO framework, and identified four main drivers influencing their adoption:

- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Technological

Opportunities

She noted that micro-credentials offer vast opportunities for students, employers, policymakers, and society as a whole. These include:

- Skilling, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives
- Improved employability and economic growth
- Promotion of lifelong learning and flexible learning pathways
- Reduction of skills mismatches within the labour market

Challenges

Dr. Baguant acknowledged the challenges encountered during the framework's development, notably regarding recognition, quality assurance, and funding mechanisms. She assured that these concerns are comprehensively addressed in the Blueprint for Micro-credentials.

Way Forward

Looking ahead, HEC Mauritius aims to operationalise an industry-led micro-credentials framework. Recent meetings with industry representatives have laid the groundwork for future collaboration, and an industry panel session is scheduled on Day 3 of the Conference to advance this dialogue.

The forthcoming framework will incorporate stackable micro-credentials supported by a quality



assurance rubric, ensuring that each credential meets defined learning outcomes and assessment standards.

Dr. Baguant concluded her presentation by reaffirming HEC Mauritius’s commitment to strengthening partnerships with industry and ensuring that micro-credentials remain relevant, credible, and responsive to national and regional skill needs.

- **Belgium Presentation**

Mr. Frederik De Decker, representing Ghent University, Belgium, on the *State of Play of Micro-credentials: Belgium/Flanders* on behalf of his colleagues Mrs. Bieke Morlion and Mr. Klaas Portier, who were also in attendance at the conference.



Photo 12: Mr. Frederik De Decker from Ghent University, Belgium, presenting during the PechaKucha session at the PoMiSA Conference 2025.

Mr. De Decker began by emphasising that lifelong learning is currently a major policy priority in Belgium, particularly in Flanders, where participation in formal lifelong learning remains relatively low—around 7%. He pointed out that participation is unevenly distributed, with older adults, individuals with lower qualifications, and those outside the workforce showing significantly lower engagement, which limits the broader societal impact of lifelong learning initiatives.

Drivers of Lifelong Learning and Micro-credentials

- ✓ **Political Drivers:**

Belgium’s efforts are guided by the European Council’s Recommendation on Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability, focusing on increasing participation and formalising terminology and legislation around micro-credentials.

- ✓ **Economic Drivers:**

Micro-credentials are seen as flexible tools to meet rapidly changing labour-market needs and to enhance access to education and training for vulnerable populations, thereby improving their employability.

- ✓ **Social Drivers:**

They foster personal and professional growth, strengthen inclusivity, and expand access to education and training opportunities for a wider range of learners.

- ✓ **Educational Trends:**



Micro-credentials align with the growing emphasis on modular learning, which promotes shorter, stackable learning pathways leading to larger qualifications, and the recognition of prior learning (RPL). This shift reflects the increased validation of competencies acquired outside traditional education systems.

✓ Workforce Trends:

Flanders is also witnessing a transition toward skills-based hiring, with employers focusing more on verified competencies than on traditional degrees. Continuous upskilling has become essential as workers seek to adapt to rapid technological and economic change.

Definition and Framework of Micro-credentials

Mr. De Decker noted that Belgium’s approach aligns fully with the European Council Recommendation on Micro-credentials, which outlines key elements that must be included in each credential.

Mandatory Elements	Optional Elements
Identification of the learner	Prerequisites for enrolment
Title of the micro-credential	Supervision and identity verification during assessment
Country/region of issuer	Grade achieved
Awarding body	Stackability or integration options
Date of issue	Additional details or context
Learning outcomes	
Notional workload (in ECTS credits, where possible)	
Level and cycle of learning (EQF/QF-EHEA)	
Type of assessment	
Form of participation	
Type of quality assurance applied	

He explained that these elements ensure transparency, comparability, and portability of learning across Europe, reinforcing quality assurance and trust among institutions and employers.

Experience in Flanders

Mr. De Decker highlighted that Flanders has over two decades of experience with modular higher education programmes that share the same principles as micro-credentials—well-defined



study components with clear learning outcomes and assessments. He noted that Flanders was already experimenting with micro-credential-like systems nearly 15 years before European-level initiatives gained momentum.

The Flemish Ministry of Education has since participated in several European projects, such as Micro-World, which have enriched local expertise and advanced policy discussions. However, micro-credential implementation in Flanders remains largely confined to higher education, with limited legislative progress over the past two years.

He acknowledged that, despite these constraints, Ghent University continues to expand its micro-credential offerings, contributing valuable institutional experience. Nonetheless, without a formal national framework, it remains challenging to fully measure the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Recommendations and Way Forward

To strengthen the national and regional policy landscape for micro-credentials, Mr. De Decker proposed the following practical steps:

1. Adopt a clear and coherent definition of micro-credentials.
2. Ensure flexibility and inclusivity in programme design and delivery.
3. Establish robust quality assurance mechanisms.
4. Encourage collaborative partnerships among institutions and stakeholders.
5. Promote lifelong learning guidance services to support learners.
6. Secure sustainable funding to ensure long-term success.

In conclusion, Mr. De Decker stressed that the successful implementation of micro-credentials depends on clear policy frameworks, integration into existing quality assurance and qualifications systems, and sustained cooperation between higher education institutions, industry, and government. These components, he noted, are essential to expanding access to lifelong learning and ensuring that micro-credentials become a durable and trusted component of the European education landscape.

- **Lesotho Presentation**

Dr. Maqalika began her presentation by stating that *micro-credentials should not be regarded as a passing trend, but rather as a “tool for dignity.”* She explained that dignity comes from recognising and validating existing skills that often go unnoticed or undocumented, particularly among individuals working in informal sectors. She highlighted the valuable expertise of artisans, farmers, youth innovators, and entrepreneurs, whose contributions are seldom acknowledged due to the absence of formal certification.

She emphasised that micro-credentials can bridge this gap by not only recognising such skills but also by connecting them to new opportunities—linking education, industry, and innovation in a way that fosters inclusion and empowerment. According to Dr. Maqalika, the overarching goal is to bring together education, industry, innovation, and policymakers to create a cohesive framework that values every individual’s capabilities.



Bridging the Digital Divide

Dr. Maqalika drew attention to the digital divide in Lesotho, noting stark disparities between rural and urban areas. She explained that many unemployed youth in remote mountain regions lack access to technology and training opportunities, which deepens inequality. She stressed that every skill in Lesotho—whether in rural or urban settings—deserves recognition, adding that some individuals in rural communities “feel like foreigners in their own space” due to limited access to education and formal training.

She called for inclusive and context-sensitive training to ensure that men and women in all regions are adequately equipped with relevant skills for modern employment.

Skills Recognition and Sectoral Activation

Dr. Maqalika emphasised the potential of TVET and ICT-driven modular and stackable learning models supported by micro-credentials to rapidly prepare people for digital futures, entrepreneurial ventures, and sectoral innovation. She reaffirmed that the future of work in Lesotho—and globally—is fundamentally digital, and micro-credentials can help ensure the country is ready for this transition.

Her diagnostic assessment identified key concerns in the policy landscape, sectoral readiness, and institutional engagement for micro-credential implementation. She also highlighted the need for coordinated action across priority sectors:

- TVET and Education
- ICT and Digital Skills Development
- Agriculture
- Textiles, Apparel, and Fashion
- Tourism, Hospitality, and Wellness

Vision for Inclusive Recognition

Dr. Maqalika concluded by outlining the National University of Lesotho’s vision to promote inclusive skills recognition, addressing inequalities between urban and rural populations. The University aims to enable all graduates to build portfolios of micro-credentials across diverse fields, empowering them to access both local and global opportunities.

She proposed a collaborative approach among PoMiSA partners—specifically suggesting that Mauritius and Belgium work together with Lesotho to address challenges and share best practices. Professor Sannasee endorsed this proposal, affirming that “*it is better to work as a community to help one another rather than in isolation.*”





Photo 13: Dr. Papali Maqalika delivering her presentation on Lesotho’s progress.

- **Interactive Session**

To begin the interactive segment, Professor R. Sannassee, the moderator, provided a brief summary of the three country presentations. He noted that Mauritius is well advanced in the development and implementation of micro-credentials, Belgium/Flanders began its efforts over two decades ago—though the term “micro-credentials” was not yet in use at the time—and Lesotho is currently at the initial stage of its journey.

The moderator then opened the floor for discussion, inviting questions and reflections based on the presentations. Referring to Dr. Borhene Chakroun’s keynote address, Professor Sannassee emphasised the importance of designing micro-credentials with flexibility, while also ensuring strong quality assurance mechanisms. He stressed that a flexible approach must never compromise the integrity and credibility of the learning outcomes.

First Question:

In terms of ensuring flexibility while maintaining quality assurance, how should each country proceed?

Response from Professor Romeela Mohee, Commissioner, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Mauritius

Professor Mohee began by seeking the continued support of all participants in advancing the national micro-credential agenda. She explained that Mauritius remains guided by its National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which serves as the foundation for quality and comparability in learning. She recommended the use of level descriptors and learning outcomes as key instruments to maintain coherence and quality in micro-credential development. She added that these aspects would be further elaborated during her presentation the following day.

Response from Dr. Papali Maqalika, National University of Lesotho

Dr. Maqalika explained that Lesotho distinguishes between credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing micro-credentials. Within the credit-bearing category, there are two subtypes:

- Nano-credentials, comprising approximately six credits or fewer; and
- Micro-credentials, which carry more than six but fewer than 120 credits—the typical credit value of a diploma.



She clarified that non-credit-bearing credentials include short courses offered by the government or NGOs, which do not carry formal credit but still contribute to professional and skills development.

Response from a Participant

Another participant highlighted the importance of recognition from both academic and industry perspectives. Academically, recognition involves aligning micro-credentials with formal programmes, allowing for module exemptions or credit transfers based on demonstrated competencies. From an industry perspective, recognition should focus on specific job-related skills, ensuring that micro-credentials meet professional and occupational standards. The participant concluded that for micro-credentials to gain credibility, they must be aligned with established quality benchmarks and clearly linked to both academic pathways and labour market needs.



Photo 14: Participants during the interactive discussion session

Panel 2: Moderator: Mr Simone Ravaioli, Director Global Ecosystems and Innovation, Parchment (AACRAO)

- **Presenter: Dr. Colen Tuandu, Namibia University of Science and Technology**

Dr. Colen Tuandu presented an overview of Namibia’s current landscape on micro-credentials (MCs), highlighting the growing significance of short, skills-based learning in the country’s higher education and training ecosystem. The presentation formed part of the “State of Play” series under the PoMiSA project, showcasing how Namibia is aligning with global and regional developments in micro-credentials.

Why Micro-credentials Now

The speaker emphasised that Namibia’s education and training systems must adapt to evolving labour market needs and rapid technological changes. Micro-credentials offer a flexible, responsive, and targeted learning approach that supports upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning.



Defining Micro-credentials

Dr. Tuandu described micro-credentials as verified, skills-focused learning achievements that can be stacked or articulated into larger qualifications. They validate specific competencies required by employers and are often shorter and more agile than traditional academic programmes.

Global and African Context

Globally, micro-credentials are gaining traction as instruments of employability and continuous learning. Within Africa, the African Union and various regional frameworks are beginning to recognise their value. Namibia's efforts align with this continental momentum toward digital transformation and lifelong learning.

Findings from the Namibian Study

The study conducted under NUST identified both opportunities and gaps:

- Growing interest among industries for short, skill-based qualifications.
- Limited national framework and recognition systems for MCs.
- Need for coordination among higher education institutions and regulatory bodies.

Industry Needs and Pilot Initiatives

Namibia's industry sectors—especially ICT, energy, and health—are seeking modular, stackable courses to fill skills shortages. Pilot initiatives at NUST and partner institutions are testing MC delivery in digital literacy and professional upskilling, showing promising outcomes.

Policy and Institutional Implications

Dr. Tuandu noted that effective implementation requires clear policy direction from the Ministry of Higher Education, Training, and Innovation, as well as alignment with the Namibia Qualifications Framework (NQF). Institutions must also develop internal mechanisms for credit transfer, learner verification, and digital certification.

Challenges

Key challenges include:

- Absence of a national recognition framework for MCs.
- Limited funding and infrastructure for large-scale implementation.
- Ensuring quality assurance and portability across institutions.

Recognition, Portability, and Access

The presentation stressed the importance of developing mutual recognition frameworks across SADC countries and ensuring equitable access, particularly for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds or remote areas.

Collaboration, Sustainability, and Quality

Dr. Tuandu called for collaboration among universities, industries, and government agencies. Sustainability will depend on shared infrastructure, robust quality assurance mechanisms, and strong partnerships with employers to ensure relevance.



Reflection and Call to Action

In closing, Dr. Tuandu invited stakeholders to embrace micro-credentials as a tool for inclusive and future-ready education. He urged continued dialogue and cooperation under the PoMiSA initiative to build an interoperable regional ecosystem for micro-credentials.

Closing Message

“The future is MC.” With this phrase, Dr. Tuandu underscored Namibia’s commitment to innovation in education and its readiness to integrate micro-credentials into its national skills development agenda.

- **Presenter: Mrs. Maili Vilson, University of Tartu, Estonia**

Mrs. Maili Vilson, representing the University of Tartu, delivered a concise presentation on the current development of micro-credentials in Estonia. The presentation outlined the country’s national context, key stakeholders, policy directions, and institutional practices surrounding micro-credentials. It also addressed how Estonia’s education and training ecosystem is responding to emerging skills needs and transitions in the labour market.

Context

The presentation began with a brief overview of Estonia’s education and innovation landscape. As a digitally advanced and knowledge-driven nation, Estonia has long embraced technology in learning. This background positions the country well for the implementation of flexible learning pathways like micro-credentials, which support its broader goals of lifelong learning and workforce adaptability.

Why Now? Skills and Transitions

Mrs. Vilson explained that Estonia’s increasing focus on micro-credentials is driven by rapid changes in the labour market, digital transformation, and shifting skills demands. Traditional qualification systems alone are no longer sufficient to keep pace with technological and economic transitions. Micro-credentials thus serve as a bridge for reskilling and upskilling workers, helping citizens remain employable in a changing economy.

Who Provides Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials in Estonia are offered primarily by universities, professional higher education institutions, and continuing education providers. The University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech) have been pioneers in piloting short courses and digital learning programmes that can be recognised as micro-credentials. Private training centers and professional associations are also increasingly active in this space.

What Are the Rules?

Mrs. Vilson noted that Estonia has introduced national-level guidelines to define micro-credentials in alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). These guidelines address aspects such as learning outcomes, assessment, certification, and credit transfer. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that micro-credentials are recognised consistently across educational institutions and by employers.



Recognition and Stackability

A key focus of the Estonian approach is stackability—the ability to combine micro-credentials into larger qualifications. This modular approach allows learners to build learning portfolios over time. Recognition mechanisms are being strengthened so that micro-credentials can be integrated into formal degree programmes and the national qualifications framework.

Employer Needs

The presentation emphasised that employer engagement is central to Estonia’s micro-credential strategy. Employers are increasingly requesting shorter, skills-based training aligned with workplace requirements. Collaboration between universities and industry ensures that course content remains relevant and that learners gain competencies that translate directly into employability.

Quality Assurance

Estonia applies rigorous quality assurance mechanisms similar to those used in formal education. Micro-credential programmes undergo evaluation for relevance, learning design, and assessment standards. The Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education plays an active role in developing standards that safeguard the credibility and portability of these credentials.

Access and Equity

Mrs. Vilson highlighted that ensuring equitable access is a priority. Estonia aims to make micro-credentials accessible to all learners, regardless of socioeconomic background, geographic location, or prior education level. Digital delivery plays an important role in achieving this inclusivity, especially for adult learners and those in rural areas.

Policy Recommendations

In her concluding remarks, Mrs. Vilson outlined several recommendations:

- Strengthen coordination between higher education institutions and employers.
- Expand digital platforms for national-level access to micro-credential offerings.
- Integrate micro-credentials more fully within the national and European qualification systems.
- Promote public awareness about the value and recognition of micro-credentials.

Closing Message

Mrs. Vilson concluded her presentation with the words “Aitäh!” (Thank you in Estonian), reaffirming Estonia’s commitment to building a flexible, inclusive, and future-oriented education system that supports continuous learning through micro-credentials.



Photo 15: Participants sharing insight during group discussion PechaKucha Session: panel 2



Panel 3- Moderator- Dr Bohene Chakroun, UNESCO Online

Presenter: Ms. Nolusindiso Kayi, Senior Manager – Strategic Research Projects, SAQA

Ms. Nolusindiso Kayi from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) delivered a comprehensive presentation on the regulation and governance of micro-credentials in South Africa. She explained how the national qualifications system is evolving to integrate micro-credentials while maintaining trust, quality, and equity as its core principles.

Integration within the National Framework

Ms. Kayi positioned micro-credentials within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), emphasising their alignment with South Africa’s educational vision of recognition, mobility, and lifelong learning. The NQF, supported by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), provides the structural foundation for incorporating micro-credentials into the national system without compromising quality standards.

Regulatory Approach and Key Themes

South Africa’s regulatory framework, Ms. Kayi explained, seeks to balance flexibility with accountability. While micro-credentials are designed to respond rapidly to labour market demands, they must also be transparent, standardised, and comparable across sectors.

Her findings were structured around three main themes:

- **Youth, Skills, and Employability:** Micro-credentials can bridge the education–employment gap by providing targeted, job-relevant competencies, but quality assurance and recognition remain essential.
- **Education–Industry Alignment:** Continuous collaboration between educational institutions and industry is necessary to ensure that micro-credential programmes meet evolving skills needs.
- **Access and Participation:** Equitable access must be prioritised through improved digital literacy, affordability, and outreach to marginalised communities.

Developing a National Regulatory Concept

Ms. Kayi noted that South Africa is drafting a national concept paper on micro-credential regulation, guided by principles of:

- **Accreditation and Alignment:** Ensuring credentials are quality-assured, credit-bearing, and integrated within NQF levels.
- **Recognition and Transparency:** Setting clear standards for issuing institutions.
- **Stackability:** Allowing learners to combine micro-credentials toward formal qualifications.
- **Balanced Oversight:** Encouraging innovation while maintaining credibility and consistency.



Implementation Pathway and Collaboration

The proposed phased approach includes pilot programmes with accredited institutions, evaluation of outcomes, and eventual scaling based on evidence. Ms. Kayi emphasised the role of a National Working Group—comprising SAQA, CHE, QCTO, and higher education representatives—in ensuring policy coherence and stakeholder alignment.

Challenges and Outlook

Despite challenges such as funding and coordination, Ms. Kayi reaffirmed South Africa’s commitment to building a credible, inclusive, and sustainable micro-credential ecosystem. She concluded by expressing gratitude in several South African languages, symbolising the country’s unity in diversity and shared vision for equitable lifelong learning.

- **Ireland Presentation – Ms. Emma Goode (University of Galway)**

Introduction

Ms. Emma Goode from the University of Galway presented an overview of Ireland’s progress in micro-credential development, highlighting national strategies, cross-sector partnerships, and strong policy support. Her presentation illustrated how Ireland has successfully aligned micro-credentials with both its National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and international recognition systems.

Context and National Priorities

Ireland’s knowledge-based and digitally advanced economy has created an enabling environment for micro-credentials. With an employment rate of 74.2%, low unemployment (4.6%), and 94% internet penetration, the country’s economy depends heavily on high-skill sectors such as services and technology. These conditions underscore the need for continuous learning and agile workforce development.

Policy Drivers – The PEST Framework

Using a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological) framework, Ms. Goode explained the key drivers:

- **Political:** Strong government commitment through national higher education and skills policies.
- **Economic:** A need for rapid upskilling to maintain global competitiveness.
- **Social:** Rising demand for flexible, career-oriented learning.
- **Technological:** Expanding digital platforms and verification tools enabling online delivery and recognition.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Quality Assurance

Ireland’s success, Ms. Goode noted, lies in its quadruple-helix collaboration between students, employers, educators, and policymakers. The national body Quality and Qualifications Ireland



(QQI) ensures that every micro-credential is aligned with NFQ levels, has defined learning outcomes, and meets international quality standards.

Employer Recognition and Impact

Over 90% of Irish employers recognise micro-credentials as valuable for validating specific skills and improving workforce adaptability, particularly in technology, healthcare, and creative industries.

Challenges and Future Directions

Ms. Goode acknowledged that while enthusiasm is strong, challenges persist—namely, ensuring sustainable funding, facilitating credit transfer, and maintaining provider consistency. She emphasised continued investment in digital infrastructure, expansion of industry partnerships, and stronger data systems to monitor learner outcomes.

Ms. Goode concluded by affirming that micro-credentials are not a substitute for traditional qualifications but a complementary pathway to lifelong learning. Ireland’s emphasis on quality, employability, and accessibility positions it as a European leader in integrating micro-credentials into national education and workforce systems.



Photo 16: Participants sharing insight during group discussion PechaKucha Session: panel 3

Session 4: Professional Development Workshops

Parallel Workshop 1: Bite-Sized Brilliance: Evaluating Micro-credential Programme Designs

Facilitators: Prof. Kirti Menon & Prof. Zahraa McDonald (University of Johannesburg)

This interactive session encouraged reflection on quality assurance, equity, and governance. Participants discussed balancing innovation and standardisation and agreed that cross-sector collaboration is key.

Objectives

The session invited critical, reflective dialogue around four aims:

1. surface real-world tensions in scaling and integrating micro-credentials;
2. examine quality assurance, equity, and governance so credentials remain credible and inclusive;
3. develop practical strategies for alignment and collaboration across the education ecosystem;
4. build a shared understanding among higher-education leaders, policymakers, and industry.



Format and Approach

Facilitators used a participatory format. Participants worked in five groups on case studies that raised complex, non-trivial questions, encouraging open reflection, peer learning, and collaborative problem-solving applicable to institutional and national contexts.

Core Discussion Themes

- Quality assurance & governance: Clear standards for curriculum, outcomes, and assessment, with transparency and proportional oversight that doesn't stifle innovation.
- Equity & access: Ensure reach beyond elite or corporate learners to rural and disadvantaged groups; prioritise digital inclusion and public support.
- Institutional & stakeholder alignment: Strengthen coordination among HEIs, QA bodies, and employers so credentials are relevant, recognised, and portable.
- Implementation tensions: Balance flexibility with consistent frameworks; address resources, staff capacity, and post-project sustainability.

Reflection and Closing

Participants closed with two minutes of silent reflection, then shared:

1. one insight that shifted their thinking;
2. one ongoing tension in their context;
3. one action to advance micro-credentials locally.

Key Takeaways

- Micro-credentials bring opportunity and tension; success hinges on balancing flexibility, recognition, and equity.
- QA must adapt to non-traditional formats without adding unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Cross-sector collaboration builds trust and interoperability.
- Ongoing reflection and questioning are essential to navigate policy and practice.

Conclusion

“Bite-Sized Brilliance” provided a focused space to rethink micro-credentials. Through Prof. Menon and Prof. McDonald’s facilitation, participants left with sharper awareness and practical intent to implement micro-credentials for inclusion, innovation, and lifelong learning.



Parallel Workshop 2: Tracking Informal Learning Toward Health Professions Micro-credential

Facilitators: Dr. Paula Barnard-Ashton & Dr. Alida Herbst (North-West University)

The session explored an AI-based application to document informal learning in health education. Participants discussed design principles, ethical implications, and competency validation through technology.

Dr. Barnard-Ashton and Dr. Herbst presented an innovative approach to integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into educational technology to track informal and microlearning among health professions educators. Their goal is to transform informal learning into verifiable evidence that can count toward a micro-credential in health professions education.

Purpose and Framework

The presenters outlined a research initiative to develop design principles for an AI-based application capable of automatically identifying, recording, and verifying educators' microlearning activities. The system would:

- Define what qualifies as microlearning in health education.
- Provide a user-friendly interface for educators.
- Generate evidence of learning and link it to formal micro-credential frameworks.

A conceptual model was introduced showing how informal learning could be formally recognised and accredited.

Concept and Theoretical Foundations

Drawing from literature on microlearning and self-directed learning, the presenters described microlearning as short, focused, and flexible learning segments—"bite-sized learning"—delivered via videos, mobile apps, or online modules. They anchored their design on established learning theories such as Cognitive Load Theory, Reflective and Experiential Learning, Communities of Practice, and Transformative Learning, emphasising reflection, collaboration, and manageable content.

Tracking and Design Principles

The proposed system would use both AI analytics and reflective tools to track progress through engagement logs, task completion, and self-assessment. Evidence would be compiled into a digital portfolio.

Key design principles include:

- Each module should target one specific skill.
- Content should be brief (3–4 minutes), accessible, and engaging.
- The interface must be intuitive and mobile-friendly.
- Learning should be competency-based, stackable, and quality-assured.



Practical Application and Insights

Using examples and participant feedback, the presenters demonstrated how the app could capture varied learning events (seminars, mentoring, short courses) and align them with measurable competencies. They highlighted AI's potential to democratise learning recognition beyond traditional classrooms, while also stressing the importance of quality assurance, ethics, and institutional collaboration.

Conclusion

The presentation showcased a research-informed, technology-driven approach to recognising informal learning in higher education. By linking AI-tracked microlearning to formal qualifications, Dr. Barnard-Ashton and Dr. Herbst's work supports the PoMiSA initiative's vision of inclusive, lifelong learning and professional development across Southern Africa.



Photo 17: Participants exchanging ideas during the professional development workshops.

Closing of Day 1

Professor Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of HEC Mauritius, thanked all presenters and participants for their active engagement. The sessions concluded with renewed momentum toward building a shared micro-credential ecosystem across Africa and Europe.



DAY 2: Wednesday, 15 October 2025

Rapporteur: Higher Education Commission Mauritius

Introduction

The second day sessions were chaired by Ms Nolusindiso Kayi from SAQA. The day commenced with a testimony from a learner who participated in micro-credential from the University of Mauritius (UoM). The learner reflected on how the flexibility of micro-credentials enabled her to study while simultaneously being able to attend to her work commitments. She mentioned that time management is essential and cautioned that micro-credentials are suitable for mature learners as they require a great deal of self-discipline. She also highlighted the importance of social support from the provider and fellow learners.

Thematic areas:

- i. Mapping micro-credentials schemas and guidance to countries
- ii. Why quality assurance of micro-credentials matters
- iii. Designing micro-credentials for adult learners
- iv. Regional priorities

Session 5: Mapping micro-credentials schemas and guidance to countries

The presentations on among others, achieving greater interoperability and digital transformation by reimagining technology to create new teaching and learning opportunities. This effort is driven by strict data standards such as semantic and data element descriptors which may be mandatory and optional.

The discussion on micro-credentials emphasises their need to be inclusive, empowering, and recognised, drawing on approaches from UNESCO, the EU, Australia, and case studies from France across formal and informal learning and non-formal recognition.

University of Technology and University of Mauritius presented on a National ICT framework for the operationalisation of Micro-credentials in Mauritius. It was mentioned that Mauritius has recently approved a framework for the implementation of micro-credentials at the national level. The core focuses of Mauritius are:

- I. Appropriate IT systems for management, registering, recording and verification;
- II. Alignment of micro-credentials to the National Qualifications Framework;
- III. Providing a robust architecture to ensure immutability, security and traceability of microcredits;
- IV. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of various actors within the micro-credentials' ecosystem; and
- V. Mapping processes for formulating the ICT framework for micro-credentials.

Finally, it addressed the critical shift toward developing policy that is structured as data, making it readable by both people and machines.



Three types of micro-credentials were identified:

1. Stackable micro-credentials (part of academic programmes)
2. Industry-led micro-credentials
3. Stand-alone micro-credentials

Mauritius presented criteria for approving micro-credentials. The criteria include:

- i. Title and learning outcome
- ii. Need and acceptability
- iii. Entry requirements
- iv. Design and credits
- v. Delivery
- vi. Resources
- vii. Assessment and moderation
- viii. Review

It was mentioned that the shelf-life of a micro-credential is set for a duration of three years. Additionally, micro-credentials should not form part of the core modules of an academic qualification. Mauritius recommends that the credits of a micro-credential should be less than 20 credits.

The Conference learnt about guiding models of online learning. A Five Stage Model of online teaching and learning was presented. The model includes:

1. Access and motivation
2. Online socialisation
3. Informal exchange
4. Knowledge construction
5. Development.

The South African Development Corporation (SADC) presented proposed elements of a regional framework for micro-credentials. The elements include:

- i. Preamble
- ii. Purpose
- iii. Definition of micro-credentials



- iv. Register of recognised micro-credentials
- v. Register of learner achievements
- vi. development of micro-credentials
- vii. Principles
- viii. Quality assurance
- ix. Stackability
- x. Public awareness
- xi. Funding and implementation of the framework

Session 6: Rapporteur: Higher Education Commission Mauritius

Session 6 proceeded with stimulating "PechaKucha" sessions, where each presenter had to deliver a 5-minute presentation on "Why the quality assurance of micro-credentials matters". These were 8 streamed fast-paced, highly visual presentations to keep conversations concise and engaging.

Effective quality assurance (QA) systems for micro-credentials are essential to building trust and confidence among all stakeholders, including learners and employers. The common features highlighted across presentations included the critical need for comprehensive policy reforms, the establishment of clear standards, and precise alignment with existing National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and National Credit Value Transfer Systems. It was recommended that a digital credential registry be created to prevent a further digital divide by addressing cross-cutting disparities or systemic barriers that exacerbate inequality. This perspective is further refined by institutions, such as Northwest University, which views digital pathways and badges as "more than credentials."

A differentiated QA approach, supported by regional and international best practices, is necessary to ensure relevance and integrity without over-regulating providers.

Session 7: Designing micro-credentials for Adult Learners

The presentation focused on micro-credentials for adult learners and the need to think about the learner and support in place for the return of an adult learner at any stage for further learning. There's a need for recognition of non-credit bearing courses offered by Moocs or Cosera or Udemy to be recognised for further learning. A national system must be used other than the university system to track these non-credit-bearing courses.

Session 8: Professional development workshops (parallel sessions)

Participants attended highly engaging professional development workshops focused on the practical use of generative AI (genAI). The session demonstrated the practical application of generative AI, empowering participants with advanced search methods and the strategic use of specific prompts across platforms like ChatGPT-5 and Gemini AI.



Day two of the conference ended with a session on regional priorities.

South African context:

Micro-credentials are inherently driven by context, a characteristic profoundly evident in South Africa. The local environment is defined by critical issues, including structural inequality, the dynamics of formal and informal economies, and fundamental barriers related to access and data connectivity. Insights from the regional reviews on strategies, policies, practices and inter-regional consultations were also shared. Furthermore, the imperative for decolonization must be taken into account, alongside environmental, water, and climate issues that present both significant challenges and new opportunities, which were echoed regionally. The foundation of this work was a robust Research methodology encompassing desktop analysis and in-depth interviews, notably including a Consultative Forum to gather critical insights. This process yielded six key themes, including 'Definitions and characteristics,' and informed the goal, which is the proposal of a regional Framework.

Moving forward, the project must consider the essential question posed on what factors are necessary to successfully consider and implement micro-credentials within the national context.

European Commission context:

The challenge of skills mismatch, which the EU also faces, forms the critical context for micro-credentials (MCs) and the broader skills compact, such as the EU of Skills initiative. A primary point of consensus across all stakeholders was the essential need to prioritize and invest in Digital infrastructure and Technological advancements, despite existing political tensions around funding. Furthermore, the importance of strengthening the digital footprint of relevant organizations was emphasized—a point highlighted in a Consultative Forum video—specifically including the obligation to repopulate information on the PoMiSA website. This increased digital presence is vital for effective advocacy and awareness efforts.

The moderator provided several key recommendations aimed at enhancing the project's standardisation and evidence-based approach. Critically, it was advised that the project establish clear regulation by developing a dedicated micro-credentials handbook or brochure, ensuring this is supported by an agreed definition for micro-credentials across the region. To provide context and validity, the report should make specific reference to the case studies and activities conducted over the past two years, while also acknowledging international precedents, such as the EU Council recommendation on micro-credentials for member states. Overall, the final documentation must clearly articulate how micro-credentials are strategically integrated as a core element of the project's vision.



DAY 3: Thursday, 16 October 2025

Rapporteur: University of Galway

Looking Beyond PoMISA.

The final session of the conference adopted a “fishbowl” format, encouraging open dialogue between panel members and the audience. Participants gathered in a circular arrangement to facilitate inclusive discussion, focusing on four central themes: project outcomes, quality assurance and frameworks for credential recognition, industry perspectives, and student needs.

Project Outcomes

Discussions on project outcomes highlighted the pivotal role of micro-credentials in addressing both regional and national training needs. Concept reports created as part of the project demonstrated their transformative potential when applied as context-specific learning tools. The conversation also underscored the importance of collaboration among key stakeholders — higher education institutions, TVET providers, industry partners, and aligned organizations — each contributing to the evolving micro-credential ecosystem.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance emerged as a cornerstone of the micro-credential framework. Conference attendees emphasized the need for clear definitions, flexibility, and portability and the inclusion of the recognition of prior learning when developing a framework. Considering these various factors, an agile framework was seen as essential to accommodate rapid developments in this space. Trust and recognition were identified as critical elements for ensuring credibility for micro-credentials, while increased awareness and understanding of micro-credentials in the wider education market were noted as still developing.

Industry Perspectives

Industry representatives stressed that the workforce is only as strong as its preparedness for tomorrow’s skills. Rapid technological and market changes demand continuous upskilling, with training often required within weeks rather than months. Funding was identified as a key enabler of course uptake, supported by National Skills Strategies and associated incentives. Industry-led graduate and internship programmes were highlighted as effective mechanisms for fostering lifelong learning and adaptability within industry. The session emphasised the collaborative approach to co-design of micro-credentials (i.e. education institutions with industry), to ensure relevance and responsiveness to emerging skills needs.

Student Needs

The student-focused discussions emphasized that micro-credentials must be designed with learners at the centre, reflecting the principles of andragogy — adult learning theory. Beyond skill acquisition, micro-credentials should nurture a culture of lifelong learning, active citizenship and personal growth. By supporting continuous professional and personal development, micro-credentials help learners remain agile in an evolving labour market, ensuring that human potential complements, rather than competes with, technological advancements such as AI.

Conclusion

The conference ended with sincere thanks to the organisers, the Higher Education Commission (Mauritius), and key conference organisers.



Conclusion

The PoMiSA Conference 2025 confirmed that micro-credentials are a strategic tool for strengthening lifelong learning, employability, and workforce responsiveness in a rapidly changing global context. Throughout the three days, stakeholders agreed that micro-credentials must be inclusive, quality-assured, and aligned to recognised national, regional and international frameworks in order to gain trust, ensure portability and support sustainable implementation.

Mauritius emerged as a regional frontrunner, having integrated micro-credentials into the National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS), secured approval of the Blueprint for Micro-Credentials, amended relevant legislation, established a Steering Committee, and launched an industry-led pilot project. These actions position Mauritius favourably as an emerging regional education and knowledge hub.

Key Takeaways

- Micro-credentials are essential for reskilling, upskilling and responding to AI-driven labour market change.
- Quality assurance and alignment with NQFs, the NCVTS, the SADCQF and international guidelines (UNESCO/EU) are critical for credibility.
- Industry co-design ensures relevance and improves graduate employability.
- Inclusivity and access must prioritise vulnerable, rural and non-traditional learners.
- Stackability, RPL and digital registries strengthen learner pathways and system transparency.
- Regional cooperation and a shared framework are required to support harmonised and sustainable implementation of micro-credentials under SADC.

In conclusion, micro-credentials are not simply short courses, but transformational instruments that can bridge education and employment, reduce inequality, and support national and regional development when anchored in strong policy, collaboration, and quality systems.

